

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Matthew Schneider on September 10, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

In lines ~~8-10~~⁷⁻⁸, "elastic material and having a top slit defined in a top thereof and a side slit defined in a side thereof, said first valve body" **is changed to** --elastic material, said first valve body comprising a top, a bottom, and a side wall extending between the top and bottom, having a top slit defined in the top thereof and a side slit defined in the side wall thereof, said first valve body-- SB 10-17-08

Claim 7 has been amended as follows:

In lines ~~10-12~~⁷⁻⁹, "joint member, and having a top slit defined in a top thereof and a side slit defined in a side thereof, said valve body" **is changed to** --joint member, said valve body comprising a top, a bottom, and a side wall extending between the top and SB 10-17-08

bottom, having a top slit defined in the top thereof and a side slit defined in the side wall thereof, said valve body--

Claim 9 has been amended as follows:

In lines ~~8-10~~⁶⁻⁷, "elastic material and having a top slit defined in a top thereof, a side slit defined in a side thereof, and a hollow space" **is changed to** --elastic material, said valve body comprising a top, a bottom, and a side wall extending between the top and bottom, having a top slit defined in the top thereof and a side slit defined in the side wall thereof, and a hollow space--

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance. An interview was held with Mr. Schneider, Applicant's representative, wherein an appreciation of the differences between the invention and the prior art was more fully developed. These differences consist of a connector as claimed with a valve body comprising a top, a bottom, and a side wall connecting the top and bottom, with a top slit in the top thereof and a side slit in the side wall thereof. The current examiner's amendment was agreed to as patentably reflecting these differences in the claims.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably